

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 01697 141846Z

ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

-----105353 141854Z /42

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6087

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 1697

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FOR CHRISTOPHER FROM AMBASSADOR JORDEN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PN, PEPR

SUBJECT : MEETING WITH PANAMA TREATY SPECIALISTS

REF: STATE 063379

1. AMBLER MOSS AND I MET WITH ESCOBAR, ROYO, LOPEZ GUEVARA AND "RORY" GONZALEZ FOR HOUR AND HALF THIS MORNING. SECOND MEETING IS PROMISED FOR THIS AFTERNOON TO GIVE ME GOP RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC RESERVATIONS/UNDERSTANDINGS DISCUSSED IN REFTEL.

2. MOSS OUTLINED MOOD IN SENATE AS NEUTRALITY TREATY VOTE APPROACHED. STRESSED THAT CRUCIAL UNDECIDED VOTES STILL NEEDED FOR TREATY TO PASS AND THAT SOME ACCOMMODATION WAS ESSENTIAL TO WIN THEM. SAID PANAMANIAN SILENCE DURING DEBATE WAS HELPFUL, APPRECIATED, AND MUST CONTINUE DURING REMAINDER OF DEBATE. SAID THAT THURSDAY VOTE WOULD, IF ALL OUR EFFORTS WERE SUCCESSFUL, BE A CLOSE WIN BUT THAT DEBATE WOULD PERHAPS BE EVEN MORE INTENSE DURING CONSIDERATION OF SECOND TREATY, WHICH HAD MANY POINTS TO ATTACK.

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3. SENATE DEBATE, CARRIED HERE ON RADIO LIVE IN SPANISH, HAS IMPRESSED PANAMANIAN AS UNPLEASANT AND AT TIMES INCULTINGS, BUT MAN IN THE STREET BELIEVES TREATIES WILL BE RATIFIED SAID PANAMANIAN. THESE NEGOTIATORS SHOW SOPHISTICATED UNDERSTANDING OF OUR POLITICAL PROCESSES, BUT SAY THEY HAVE TAKEN CRITICISM FROM OWN PEOPLE AND PRESS FOR NOT RESPONDING TO POINTS ON SENATE

DEBATE.

4. THEY PROMISED TO BE HELPFUL, BUT SAID THEY HAVE LIMITS. SAID A SECOND PLEBISCITE WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE. STATED THAT THE DECONCINI "CANAL CLOSURE" RESERVATION WAS FLATELY UN-ACCEPCTABLE, WOULD PERMIT INTERVENTION ON SLIGHTEST PRETEXT (STRIKE, LANDSLIDE) AND IF ADOPTED WOULD CAUSE REJECTION OF TREATY.

5. SHOWED CONSIDERABLE FLEXIBILTYY WITH RESPECT TO DECONCINI AND NUMM "POST 2000" RESERVATIONS. ALTHOUGH DID NOT GIVE FORMAL POSITION, RECOGNIZED IT IMPOSED NO OBLIGATIONS ON PANAMA AND DID NOT CHANGE TREATY, ALTHOUGH IT ALTERED PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPECTATIONS OF PANAMANIAN PEOPLE BE REFERENCE TO "MILITARY PRESENCE," WHICH WAS OFFENSIVE.

6. CONCERNING ARTICLE XII, SAID FORMULAS UNDER DISCUSSION COULD ALL REQUIRE SECOND PLEBISCITE. HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH SUBSTANCE, HOWEVER, AND WILL EXPLORE SATISFACTORY LEGAL FORM. JORDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RESUMPTION, NEGOTIATION, MEETING, CANCELLATION, TREATY RATIFICATION, CONTADORA, CAT-B, NEGOTIATIONS, CANALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PANAMA01697
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P850103-1833, N780003-0449
Format: TEL
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780371/aaaacif.tel
Line Count: 82
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 6de3f5c7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, STADIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, STADIS
Reference: 78 STATE 63379
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3340510
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH PANAMA TREATY SPECIALISTS
TAGS: PREL, PEPR, PBOR, XK, PM, PN, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbcc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6de3f5c7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014